

Testimony in support of House Bill No. 6635 *AN ACT CONCERNING SOLAR POWER*

I am David Henri, from New Hartford. I am a solar professional who was recently laid off when Akeena Solar closed its installation office in Milford. I think one of the main reasons this happened was the instability of the solar rebate programs in the northeast. I applaud the amendments to Bill 6635 that address this issue. In CA the Solar Initiative uses a gradually declining rebate program; this actually helps people decide to go with solar before the rates drop. Following that example is definitely the way to go. Separating the residential and commercial funds are also a good idea.

I also think we can facilitate the rapid deployment solar electricity in CT by using 2 methods.

First, mandate multiple tiered electric rates for residential consumers. Unlike the UI tiered rate that increases at 500 kWh/ month, set the tiers at 100 kWh intervals. This is a fair carrot and stick approach that will encourage conservation, efficiency and solar adaptation. The people who use less per month and stay in the lower tiers pay less per kWh, those who use more pay more. By having the tiers in smaller intervals consumers can try to curb usage to reach the next lower attainable rate. Changing the rates to multiple tiers would be a low cost solution with high results. Another method would be mandatory time of day rates.

The second measure is a little more complicated to explain, so please bear with me. The trouble with rebates or even feed in tariffs, is that most of the people paying for them do not benefit as much as the actual receiver of the rebate does. Some people or businesses get rebates, but most do not. Even though many people understand the reason is to expand solar use, it still creates a feeling of resentment and envy.

We can correct this situation by funding systems that would be owned by all the ratepayers and citizens. By fully funding a large system on State property, we could create a State Green Energy Park. This could be a place for people to visit to learn about renewable energy and reflect on the beauty of their solar electric system. This solar electric system could be designated as a sustainable energy Monument to signify the resolute spirit of CT citizens. As center piece for the states renewable commitment it would also generate clean electricity.

The solar electricity would be sold to the grid at prevailing retail rates. The revenue stream thus created would be used to expand the solar electric system. The continuing funding for this project would be provided by the sun. This is possible because there are no stake holders wanting to get their investments back, and system operation cost are low. As electric rates rise and solar equipment prices fall, the rate of growth would accelerate.

I am suggesting that we build a green power plant that actually grows in the sun! This public monument would continue to grow as long as the sun shines and there is a market for electricity. Let us use some of the Renewable Energy Investment Funds to build a gift for our posterity. Let us provide a growing source of clean electricity for now and the future.

Thank-you

David Henri, 37 Richards Road New Hartford, CT 06057-2817 henris3@charter.net